

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Adjustment Administration
Washington, D. C.

October 16, 1939

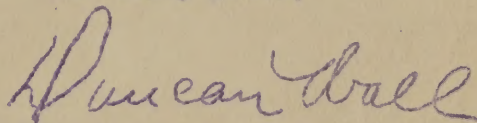
TO DIVISION OF INFORMATION PERSONNEL AND REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES:

Enclosed is a summary of the proceedings of the AAA Division of Information Conference recently held.

This should serve to refresh memories as to points covered and decisions arrived at during the conference, and help to set up some patterns of work for the ensuing year.

If, in reviewing it, you find points on which action should be taken immediately, I am sure that Wayne, Lyle and I will appreciate it if you will remind us to get the thing started. Conversely, it will get us all to moving faster and more effectively if each one will go through this summary carefully and work in line with it in his own field.

Sincerely yours,



Duncan Wall, Acting Director
Division of Information

Enclosure
#734

JAN 29 1940

SUMMARY OF AAA DIVISION OF INFORMATION CONFERENCE

NOTE: These notes cover the sessions at Mount Weather September 29-October 1, some later discussions mainly with fieldmen, and in some cases indicate action taken or contemplated on suggestions made in discussion.

Objectives of AAA

1. Fair share of national income
2. Soil Conservation
3. Balanced abundance

Objectives of educational program

1. To develop farm leadership
2. To explain the AAA program
3. To explain the background of the AAA program
4. To develop the democratic process
5. To educate other groups

In general the national educational program of the AAA should be based on field work and not centralized either in Washington or in the field.

Cooperative groups

The following cooperating groups were suggested; the first 5 are considered the most important and are arranged in the order of their importance:

1. AAA committees
2. Small town businessmen
3. Women's groups
4. Farm organizations
5. Extension
6. Vocational agriculture
7. Agricultural college faculties
8. Religious groups
9. Agricultural trades, larger business groups, wildlife conservationists, labor-consumer groups, patriotic groups

The point was made in this discussion on cooperating groups that the turn-over of county and community committeemen should be taken into account in educational work. The turn-over in Nebraska, for example, was estimated at 30 percent per year.

Types of information needed

1. To properly service committeemen, the Division and fieldmen should
 - a. Supply shorts on current data
 - b. Supply background information in a steady flow
 - c. Assist in training personnel of state committees, county committees, and community committees
2. Field wants
 - a. More frequent general informative contact on trends, current situations and forthcoming activities involving AAA and department.
 - b. Information helpful in meeting situation calling for lower

acreage allotments as per acre yields rise, particularly for corn in NCR.

3. Washington office wants

- a. To know what state assistants are doing
- b. To know how data sent out from Washington are being used
- c. To know if such data are going well (currently)
- d. To know if such data are timely when they reach the field
- e. The fieldmen to point out what is wanted or needed from time to time. It was generally agreed that consistent efforts should continue to be devoted to developing means for cutting the lag time between release of information from Washington and the availability of proper explanation in the hands of county and community committeemen.

Organization

1. Need for more state assistants

There are now assistants in 25 states, and that in the near future there will be 6 more distributed as follows: 1 in SR, 3 in WR, and 2 in ECR.

2. Both field and Washington urged need of pressing for speed and certainty in transmitting correspondence from and to state office assistants and Washington staff through regions and state offices.

3. Servicing of state assistants by fieldmen

- a. Several fieldmen stated that a large part of their time is still devoted to educating state committees and state committee chairmen on the need for, and the scope of activities of, state assistants. There is still a need for building up state assistants with the state committeemen.
- b. On the question of how the fieldmen service the state assistants, one of the regional representatives stated as an example that he spent the first day at the state office "visiting" the state committeemen, state Extension Editor, and state assistant; the second day in planning the work of the state assistant with him, and agreeing on planned items and procedure. Considerable time on the second day was also spent in tying in the visual and information aids with the committee work and in going over details with the state assistant of his work for the next several weeks, answering questions, etc.

House organs

1. Briefly Speaking

The proposed new set-up for Briefly Speaking was explained, as well as regional and state house organs now in use. It was generally agreed that Briefly Speaking should carry some prominently placed statement that would indicate to committeemen that it is their house organ.

2. Crop Insurance News Letter

It was brought out that the Crop Insurance News Letter is not adequate insofar as there still continues to be a lack of sufficient return of information from the field. It was agreed that regional representatives would continue to work on state committees in order to stimulate the inflow of crop insurance data of news

type. However, it was stated that this was rather a difficult job because there are so many other tasks that the fieldmen had to devote their time to.

Farmer-businessmen meetings

The North Central Division is now scheduling its winter farmer-businessmen meetings, and all regional representatives continue to consider the scheduling of these meetings as one of their most important jobs. It was suggested that some memorandum on the way to hold meetings with reports of good and bad experiences in past meetings would be useful to the regional representatives. North Central meetings, it was said, could use some review material on wheat, pork, beef, exports, and the Argentine situation. Southern Region representatives stated they could use more local material.

Visual Aids

General

1. General feeling was that better facilities for carrying on visual aid work must be developed in states through
 - a. More and better photo equipment
 - b. Finding more capable photo personnel
 - c. Continued training
2. Pictures (mats, film strips) made in state for use in state are most important. Washington production and use secondary.
3. Clear-cut procedure for state assistants needed, particularly in WR, on visual matters.
4. Complete handbook of visual aid materials, procedure and some techniques requested for state assistants.

Photography

1. Need of some additional equipment felt by fieldmen.
2. Agreed to order film through Washington whenever possible, anticipating needs and using field purchases only in emergency.
3. Improvement in understanding of procedure needed at Salt Lake City laboratory for WR.
4. Agreed more necessary to build up field photo facilities than to employ staff photographer, but this might not apply to a man to teach techniques to field people.
5. Joyce Roberts asked by Wall to work out simple standard state office photo file plan.

Movies

1. Status of AAA movie

The present status of the big AAA movie was explained and some explanation given of the difficulties encountered in getting the movie under way, and some of the points that the divisional representatives in Washington were watching in order to hold the movie theme to the AAA plan for it.

2. Mr. Darrow pointed out that it would be advisable for fieldmen to begin to prepare state committees for the shock that they will experience when they find out that the movie is not to be purely an AAA propaganda matter but rather a general agricultural program picture.

3. Distribution of AAA movie

Mr. Darrow also pointed out that there is still the question of the matter of commercial distribution of the movie and that it may be necessary for the field force of the AAA generally to build up a substitute for commercial distribution as a means of creating a demand for the picture.

4. State movies

Ohio has about a thousand feet of film and expects to complete its movie by Nov. 1; South Dakota has a movie completed and in Washington, Michigan has about 800 feet of film which has yet to be edited; Wisconsin has about 600 feet; Nebraska has about 600 feet and little work is being done on it at present; a movie is being made in Maine.

There was some discussion on the question of distributing movies made in one state in other areas, and it seemed to be the general impression in Crop Insurance and in South Dakota, that the S. D. Crop Insurance movie could be shown in other states at least simultaneously with showings in S. D.

Porter Hedge pointed out that we do not have an accepted procedure for developing state movies. Agreed to develop plan here.

5. Discussed with Ashton possibility of expanding 6-minute "Farm and City" (sound) to 10-minutes for meeting use. Not advisable, but approved idea of starting now on a short for next fall's fairs.

Exhibits

There seemed to be general approval on the following points:

1. Calendar of work for next year's fairs, starting now, must be met. Much trouble this year due to lateness.
2. Need to find way to avoid \$25 payment requirement from fair.
3. Increase the number of portable exhibits.
4. Make up new and/or remake a very few exhibits for the larger fairs for next year.
5. Experiment with a small panel for a movie at state fairs for next year.
6. Build up some commodity or economic unit exhibits.
7. Develop another background poster for next year.
8. Use poster and portable exhibits in windows at meetings, etc., through the coming winter.
9. Develop the use of pictures in windows of county offices or other available window space currently and supply sufficient pictures for frequent changes.

A majority of regional representatives seemed to think more emphasis should be placed on county exhibits and that portable exhibits, as well as all other exhibits, should be improved in order to:

- a. Identify the exhibit as an AAA exhibit
- b. Tie it close to the state or county office

The Western Region representatives proposed that before any old exhibits were scrapped, they should be considered for secondary distribution in the Western Region.

Film strips

1. The question was raised very seriously as to whether film strips should be continued. No definite answer was reached, and there seemed to be general confusion among fieldmen as to how film strips could be most adequately used. Present use seemed to be spotty, and several fieldmen stated that the ones now available were not very well adaptable to AAA information work. Comment was made that the subjects in many of those available are considered too elementary. It was suggested that action film strips might be made, and considerable background information on the ever-normal granary and other phases of the AAA program worked into the discussions accompanying the showing of the film strips.
2. Developed in later discussion that state and Washington film strip production will be (1) improved (2) accelerated if directed to an obvious use. That is, put proposition to state on basis of "you need an attraction for farmer-businessmen meetings. A film strip will help provide this. Make a film strip by (date) for this particular use."
3. "Pioneering" (film strip with sound) to be given full trial, but NCR and WR have reservation, feeling (1) need to get committeemen trained in talking (2) need home-talent pictures, not Washington-canned.
4. Suggestions in for film strips on:
 - a. Interregional relationships
 - b. World war and present situation.
5. Discussion tended to favor:
 - a. Use of slides for variability
 - b. Use of color for greater "pull."
 - c. Finding ways to get local (county) color pictures -- perhaps through making a sample series for 1 or more states per region.
6. Reports by states on film strip status:
 - a. North Dakota--Majors to slant a film strip for farmer-businessmen.
 - b. Montana--Range strip in process in Washington.
 - c. Washington--Pacific Coast diversified farming strip in process.
 - d. Oregon--Held up, but range and diversified farming strips in process now.
 - e. Utah--New state informational assistant has worked in

engraving plant; no strip in making.

2. Arizona--Getting pictures together on range program.

Mats

1. It was generally agreed that the Uncle Jim mat had outlived its usefulness, and it was also agreed that a successor to that type of mat should be worked up. Among other suggestions, the art work should be more real; the mat should be changed to newspaper style and should be more adaptable to local stories and use. There was general feeling that the new state mats were considered good with suggested changes in style.
2. Requested that a "sample book" be worked up showing art samples of:
 - a. Weekly feature services as
New Uncle Jim series
"Agrifacts"
 - b. Mat styles for special occasions, as
Graphic economic facts through symbols, plain and articulated graphs, and graph-photo layout combinations.
 - c. Occasional picture-story layouts, as
Large (1 page)
Small (2, 3, 4, columns)
3. FCIC willing to finance crop insurance mats; fieldmen report these are being handled as part of AAA program.

Weekly News Service

1. It was reported on crop insurance clippings the biggest percentages were based on weekly news stories and that relatively few background, human-interest, or longer features were used from the Weekly News Service.
2. The majority of regional representatives stated that the state assistants were not able yet to get enough local stories in the states.
3. It was said also that the weekly stories were still getting out too late although there has been some improvement recently.
4. The point was made that the weekly news stories were important from the policy standpoint as the states look generally to Washington for guidance on policy questions.
5. Fieldmen seemed to adopt as a good idea the sending out of wires or airmail letters containing suggestions on how to adapt certain points in daily press releases to local situations.
6. Generally, AAA Shorts have gone well.

AAA Information Calendar

The monthly calendar has been well received and had widespread usage in the field.

Farm paper and magazine coverage

This coverage is said to be good in the Southern and West Central Regions, but very scanty in other areas as most information in these other areas came direct from Washington correspondence.

It was suggested that state assistants might take tips from the Calendar and prepare stories in advance for use in these papers and magazines.

It was stated also that the information fieldmen should consider other trade presses such as those in the banking, credit, agricultural machinery, etc. fields.

Radio

1. Radio notes

Radio notes seasonally were considered to be very useful, and the field can make very good use of these in slack seasons.

2. Farm & Home Hour

It was said that reaction to AAA material on the F & H Hour is generally good.

3. Several commented on the fact that farm programs generally were undramatic. Fieldmen suggested that Washington consider radio transcriptions of live news at intermittent intervals.

Bulletins

Fieldmen generally agreed that bulletins had limited usefulness and that most of our publication work should hold to circulars supplemented with quick distribution of mimeographed and committeemen letter material.

General approval for short illustrated leaflet style of PC series. Titles of these well liked.

Distribution

It was pointed out that the perennial problem of distribution of material was still with us. On this point Duncan Wall is to appoint a committee to make recommendations on the problem of distributing.

Dexter, Mackenzie, Schlup asked to serve on this committee. Information assembled and Jim McCormick assigned to make complete study all regions. Later conference with Western Division developed opposition to many leaflets and "mass" of other materials, some from other agencies. Proposed to try 1 regular weekly envelope containing week's supply of informational materials, with emergency stuff "extra edition" by airmail.

Porter Hedge suggested the development and application of a library system in the county offices. This seemed to be accepted as evidence of the need for a system of filing informational material in county offices, although it is tied up very closely with the distribution problem.

AAA information work in war time

1. What AAA can do

It was pointed out that in the last war there was almost no set-up for adapting the Department quickly for war time needs, but that now the Department has an organization which is geared to

service agriculture in any situation that may develop out of war conditions.

It was stated that the information forces of the Department would have to carry a very serious burden as war developed on a broader scale; that is, if there were such a development, there would be an even greater need for coordination among the bureau information services of the Department.

2. Opinion on the reaction of farmers to war conditions during Sept. seemed to be:
 - a. Feeling of caution among the farmers about making any sudden move to change the farm plans.
 - b. Most farmers remember vividly the aftermath of the last war.
 - c. Farmers generally depending on Government agencies which helped them over the rough spots in the last six years.
3. Foreign trade
 - a. It was agreed that regional representatives should keep a close watch on the import situation, as many people, farmers and otherwise, may now think that we can kill off competitive imports.
 - b. It was brought out that the Washington staff should develop more information on the South American foreign trade, particularly on exports of products competitive with U.S. production.
 - c. Considerable thought in the Department has been given in recent years to the possibility of importing Central American hardwoods as a means of establishing credits for U.S. exports.
4. Use of last war as precedent
 - a. It was pointed out that too many people in the present situation are prone to think in terms solely of the last war, whereas we do not know how far this war may be extended and how long it may last; therefore we should not place too much reliance on comparisons with the last war.
 - b. It was said that in case of a one-year war, there would be very little real effect on this country, but if the war lasted two or three years there would probably develop another boom and subsequent serious need for readjustment. If the war strung out in a way similar to the Napoleonic or Thirty Years War, there was no precedent whatsoever that the Department could use for a guide in policy.
 - c. The point was made that the very uncertainty of the war's duration might be used to point out the flexibility of the AAA program.
5. Information policy

Department policy was reiterated on the following line: The present information services may go as far into the background and factual material as desired, but there were so many in-ponderables that there should be no discussion or statements on the effect of war moves on prices. Probably in the next six

weeks policy will be clarified at least to some extent.

Relationship of AAA program to other Department programs

Below are given Department objectives as listed at this conference and objectives as listed at the Mount Weather conference of all information services of the Department - for comparison.

Objectives of Department
(AAA Div. of Info. Conf.
at Mt. Weather, Va.,
Sept. 29 - Oct. 1, 1939)

1. Increased farm income
2. Acquire and diffuse useful information relating to agriculture
3. General welfare
4. Conservation of agricultural resources
5. Stabilizing supplies
6. Fair and efficient distribution
7. Expansion of uses and markets
8. Marketing programs
9. Production efficiency
10. Adequate credit facilities
11. Agricultural public health
12. Conservation of human resources
13. Economic democracy
14. Encourage family-size farms

Objectives of Nat'l Farm Program
(USDA Information Representatives
Conf. at Mt. Weather, Va.,
Sept. 8-10, 1939)

1. Stabilization of farm income in good balance with non-farm income -- SCS, AMS, FSCC, MA, SD, CCC, FS, AAA, CI, ACE
2. Wise use of basic resources -- SCS, SD, FS, AAA, REA, ACE
3. Security of farm tenure -- SCS, FS, CI
4. Improved rural living -- REA, ACE, FS, SD, CI
5. Stabilization of rural communities -- CI, FS, SCS, REA
6. Adequate and efficient agricultural production -- SD, FS, ACE, AAA
7. Efficient and fair distribution -- AMS, MA, SD, CEA
8. Wide markets and new uses -- FSCC, MA, FS, ACE
9. Adequate consumption -- FSCC, MA
10. Improving the lot of the underprivileged in agriculture -- SCS, SD, FS, FSA
11. Promoting operator ownership of farms -- AAA, CI, FSA
12. To provide operations for development of rural leadership, widest possible local participation and democratic processes -- AAA, SCS, MA, FCI, FSA, FS, REA
13. Acquisition and dissemination of knowledge -- Virtually all agencies

Work with Women

Mrs. Cunningham reported the following meetings or work in progress.

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| October 7 | Meeting of all Kentucky and Southern Indiana rural women and Home Demonstration agents at Louisville sponsored by Courier Journal. |
| October 8, 9, and 10. | Conferences on arrangements for urban-rural meetings in Iowa and Illinois. |
| October 13, 14, 15, 16 | Montana meetings. |
| October | Possible conference on arrangements of urban-rural conference in South Dakota. |
| October | <u>Hope</u> for new farmer field woman in North Dakota - if she's there will spend some time with her. |
| November 14 | Texas Federation of Women's Club Convention at Wichita. |
| November 27 28 | Missouri rural-urban conference. |
| January 8, 9, 10 | Arkansas (tentative). |
| January 11, 12 | Oklahoma (tentative). |

Mrs. Cunningham reported further on the questions proposed for discussion at Mt. - either relating to women's educational work as follows:

1. Indiana, Iowa, and Missouri have farmer field women. - what is building back North Dakota? Minnesota? and Nebraska?
2. Indiana has had an urban-rural women's conference; Arkansas has been cared for by Mrs. Devais; Texas is holding one on September 28 and 29; Chicago has had a local one; Missouri has set November 27 and 28 as their date; Illinois and Iowa are planning conferences; some work has been done in California, Oregon and North Dakota.

3. Texas and other Southern States are working on the AAA program on a use approach; home demonstration agents and home economics teachers are working together on this, teaching their women and girls to study the Triple-A program with a view to the application of certain features in it to their own home improvement plans. In other states the work is more abstract and therefore more vague, less accurate and more easily classed as "propaganda." Home demonstration agents therefore approach it charily and with less understanding.
4. O yes! yes! Yes! yes! Committeemen should encourage their wives to become active for the program.
Reasons:
 - (1). They are impatient and are a drag on their husbands in the matter of time devoted to the program. If it was their program too, it would be a different thing.
 - (2). They look and feel silly and are resentful at knowing so little of what takes so much of their husband's time and interest.
 - (3). They constitute an available group which as a group has no program and could be welded together to support the program. Every other group has a first interest already.

On recent work Mrs. Cunningham reported that a rural-urban women's conference was held in Texas; that 5 out of 6 meetings at schoolhouses in Missouri which she attended with Mrs. Morrow, five out of six were overflow meetings.

Soil Conservation Service

The first joint conference of Soil Conservation Service and Triple-A field and information personnel was held Monday following the Mt. Weather conference. The morning was spent in developing through discussion the unified objectives of the Department's entire program which are common to Triple-A, SCS and Farm Security, and how each agency helps to attain these common objectives. The objectives were listed about the same as in the Mt. Weather conference, already given. Some time was also spent in acquainting workers of each agency with the program of the other. Need for brief publications for intra-departmental education of workers on programs of the various agencies was felt.

Public Attitudes Survey

Conference was arranged with Mr. Lickert and his staff in the BAE Information Division. This staff is making surveys of farmers' attitudes in regard to questions of agricultural policy and operations of Departmental programs, using a method similar to that employed by the Gallup Poll. This group is attempting to sample 25 representative counties with a check group of 25 other counties. The staff is not complete and at the present time no reports or summaries of conclusions are available. Mr. Lickert and the others are eager to have suggestions as to questions on which surveys would be helpful and promise that as their program develops information as to certain questions and certain areas can be made available. They were furnished with dates of forthcoming rural-urban womens' conferences and may be able to have personnel there.

Vocational Agriculture

Proposals made by Alexander before leaving the Division as to future work were discussed. The basis of procedure is to bring the state committee and the state supervisor of vocational education together on a question of what information the state AAA organization has which the vocational agriculture organization may desire to obtain and transmit to teachers in the state for their use in teaching high school boys and in conducting night classes for adult farmers. The emphasis here is upon the fact that this teaching information is made available to the vocational agriculture supervisor and his staff for use on their own terms as they see fit.

Alexander had two alternative proposals as to a successor for himself: (1) that various state vocational agriculture men be borrowed for periods of several months each to work out from Washington as Alexander did, (2) that the Division of Information employ for limited periods of four to six weeks a vocational agriculture staff man to spend his time with the state committee in his own state preparing teaching material for use in his own state. Tanner suggested that at least in one or more states as a test we might ask this man to prepare a film strip to be used in his instructional work. States suggested in which Plan No. 2 might be followed were North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Montana, Texas, California, South Carolina, Georgia. No. 2 plan met with the most approval.

Sugar

A conference was held with Dr. Bernhardt and members of his staff of the Sugar Division and with Jim Hasselman in Charge of Information for the Office of Marketing Regulatory Work. Dr. Bernhardt pointed out the reasons for removal of the sugar restrictions, stating that in the temporary crisis which developed as a result of consumer hoarding, merely raising the quotas would not have made enough sugar immediately available to calm the situation, that it was felt the only thing to do was to suspend the quotas. They can be re-imposed by the President when conditions again require it. The field men requested a brief factual statement on the sugar position under present international conditions with some discussion of the position under conditions of the preceding World War. The consensus was that distribution should proceed on the leaflet, "Sugar Act and Sugar Beet Growers".

